

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A process for producing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 100 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25° C, which process comprises the step of

depolymerizing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 4 to 400 mPa's in the presence of gaseous hydrogen halide to achieve a reduction in viscosity of the ethylcellulose of at least 10 percent and packaging the depolymerized ethylcellulose without a neutralization step after depolymerization.

2. (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 10 mPa's is produced.

3. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the depolymerization is conducted in the presence of gaseous hydrogen chloride.

4. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the depolymerization step is conducted in the presence of from 0.5 to 5.0 percent of water, based on the weight of the ethyl cellulose.

5. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein the depolymerization step is conducted in the presence of from 0.1 to 0.5 weight percent of hydrogen chloride, based on the total weight of ethylcellulose to be depolymerized.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 1 wherein an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 4 to 100 mPa's is depolymerized to an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 1 to 2.5 mPa's.

8. (Currently amended) A process for producing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 100 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25° C, which process comprises the steps of

- a) etherifying alkalized cellulose with ethyl chloride in the presence of an organic solvent to produce an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 4 to 400 mPa's and
- b) depolymerizing the produced ethylcellulose in the presence of gaseous hydrogen halide to achieve a reduction in viscosity of the ethylcellulose of at least 10 percent and
- c) packaging the depolymerized ethylcellulose without a neutralization step after depolymerization.

9-16. (Canceled)

17. (New) The process of Claim 8 wherein an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 10 mPa's is produced.

18. (New) The process of Claim 8 wherein the depolymerization is conducted in the presence of gaseous hydrogen chloride.

19. (New) The process of Claim 8 wherein the depolymerization step is conducted in the presence of from 0.5 to 5.0 percent of water, based on the weight of the ethyl cellulose.

20. (New) The process of Claim 1 wherein an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 4 to 100 mPa's is depolymerized to an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 1 to 2.5 mPa's.